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# Demography of Honors: The Census of U.S. Honors Programs and Colleges

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## INTRODUCTION

Beginning in 2013 and spanning four research articles, we have implemented an empirical analysis protocol for honors education that is rooted in demography (Scott; Scott and Smith; Smith and Scott “Growth”; Smith and Scott, “Demography”). The goal of this protocol is to describe the structure and distribution of the honors population, but instead of a focus on aggregates of students or faculty and staff, the educational institution is the unit of analysis. This organizational demography has answered many questions about the growth of honors throughout collegiate education over time

(Smith and Scott, “Growth”); documenting infrastructural and programmatic differences between honors colleges and programs, and between those programs at two-year and four-year institutions (Scott); identifying the existence of all institutions offering honors education in the United States and how they are grouped by institutional mission and control (Scott and Smith); and mapping the location and regional affiliation of all honors programs and colleges in the United States (Smith and Scott, “Demography”).

We learned that in the first half-century of the existence of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC), honors education expanded by 400%, with specific waves of growth in the 1960s and 1980s, followed by increases in the 2000s in the number of programs transitioning to colleges at a time when overall growth in honors plateaued (Smith and Scott, “Growth”). We saw that offering honors curricula campus-wide is now pervasive in American higher education, having a presence at 1,503 of the 2,500 nonprofit undergraduate institutions, with that presence divided into over 1,300 programs and just under 200 colleges (Scott and Smith). We discovered that clear patterns exist among honors types in NCHC: institutions with honors colleges generally evidence more complex infrastructure and more investment of resources than institutions with honors programs, and the same can be said of honors programs at four-year institutions compared to those at two-year institutions (Scott). We noticed that institutional control, i.e., private versus public control, does not distinguish honors programs, with nearly equal percentages of public and private institutions having programs, but it does matter for honors colleges, with many more located in the public sector (Scott and Smith). We determined that the distribution of honors programs and colleges varies by institutional type, with many more honors colleges in doctoral universities than in master’s, baccalaureate, or associate’s institutions (Scott and Smith). Finally, we discovered that NCHC represents nearly 60% of institutions with honors programs or colleges and that non-members appear to have far fewer resources and be more isolated from the honors community, not only nationally but also regionally (Smith and Scott, “Demography”). One qualifying note is that a few non-members are doctoral universities with large honors programs; although they do not fit the overall profile of non-members, they are too few in number to affect the generalization.

We proposed enriching the dataset we assembled that answered the questions above by combining forces with NCHC so that we could potentially answer additional questions. In the spring of 2016, we shared our Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System, or IPEDS (Carnegie), dataset with

the NCHC office so that they could begin reaching out to the non-members we had identified in order to grow membership. After following NCHC's data use and access permission protocol, we then jointly composed a questionnaire to conduct a census of honors programs and colleges in the United States. The questionnaire items are similar or identical to those used in the NCHC Member Survey of 2012–13 (Scott) although a few new items were added, including characteristics of the administrators running the honors academic unit, presence of a student participation fee, and employment of student workers.

Only one prior study (Scott) has surveyed all NCHC institutional members regarding programmatic and infrastructural features of honors programs and colleges, and no prior survey of these features has included both NCHC members and non-members. Because we attempted to gather data from all institutions offering honors education for which we could find contact information, we call this a census; it allows us to answer questions about variation across types of honors entities (colleges, four-year programs, and two-year programs) and between NCHC member institutions and non-members. We considered specifically (1) institutional features; (2) characteristics of honors heads; (3) characteristics of staff and faculty; (4) costs and benefits for students; (5) curricular features; and (6) administrative and advancement characteristics.

## METHODOLOGY

To answer our research questions, we began—with the dataset we previously developed from multiple sources—to explore the national landscape of honors education (for more information see Scott and Smith). The dataset began with the 2014 list of 4,664 institutions in IPEDs. To narrow the focus, we excluded institutions that did not deliver a traditional undergraduate education at nonprofit institutions, resulting in the removal of 1,290 for-profit institutions, 261 graduate-only institutions, 479 institutions offering special-focus curricula, 35 tribal institutions, and all 49 institutions located outside of the 50 states of the U.S. The end result was 2,550 nonprofit colleges and universities offering a traditional undergraduate education. The 2016 IPEDS dataset used the Carnegie Basic Classification that distinguishes associate's colleges (two-year institutions) from four-year institutions and that further divided the latter into baccalaureate colleges, master's universities, and doctoral universities in their 2015 report. Note that the IPEDS definitional structure includes a branch campus of multi-campus systems only when the

former has its own governance unit; on rare occasions, this may mean that honors programs with multiple memberships in NCHC had to be classified as one honors program despite operating as multiple programs within one campus system.

We then limited our dataset to those institutions that offer honors education in a campus-wide manner, excluding those having only departmental honors programs. We then searched online through the university's website for the presence or absence of information on honors education at each of the 2,550 institutions studied; when the presence of honors was detected, we further examined whether it was institution-wide and whether it was designated as an honors program or college (for more information, see Scott and Smith). Membership in NCHC was based on its 2016 list of institutional members, excluding for-profit companies, organizations that provide study abroad or internships only, honors societies, and individual/professional members.

Once a full dataset was in place and contact information for each of the programs was collected, we then worked with the national office to conduct the NCHC 2016 Census of Honors Programs and Colleges, the primary source of data for this project. Fall 2014 IPEDS enrollment data (National Center for Education Statistics, or NCES) were merged with census survey responses, allowing us to examine characteristics such as Carnegie classification, institutional control, and institution size, i.e., undergraduate full-time equivalent student enrollment. Census question wording and other details about response options, data transformations, and merged IPEDS data can be found in the Appendix.

The NCHC Census was administered from the National Collegiate Honors Council home office as an online survey using the SurveyGizmo® web-based application. After review and approval by the NCHC Data Use Policy Committee, the survey was launched on September 26, 2016, several weeks before the national meeting of the NCHC in Seattle. As part of the invitation to participate, target participants were offered an incentive of inclusion in a random drawing for one of two \$500 vouchers for NCHC institutional membership fees in the following year. Invitation emails included unique survey hyperlinks for each respondent so that response and non-response could be tracked. Five reminder email messages were sent out to institutions that had not responded by the time of each specific reminder. The reminders were sent on 25 October (roughly 4 weeks after launch), 11 November (7 weeks), 30 November (9 weeks), 12 December (11 weeks), and 2 January 2017 (14 weeks), and the survey was then closed on 16 January 2017, after approximately sixteen weeks in the field.

The 2016 Census was sent to the contact of record for the 849 degree-granting NCHC institutional members as well as individuals at 186 non-member honors programs/colleges for whom we had contact information from the earlier phases of the demography of honors project. Of the 1,035 representatives who received the invitation to participate in the census, 458 gave affirmative consent of participation and submitted an online survey, for an overall response rate of 44.3 percent. However, member and non-member segments of the overall sample did not participate at the same rates. NCHC member institutions were almost twice as likely to participate in the NCHC Census. Of the 458 completed census forms, 408 were from NCHC member institutions (48.1 percent response rate), and 50 were from non-member institutions (26.9 percent response). While the 26.9 percent response rate for non-member institutions was considerably lower than it was for NCHC member institutions, it is nonetheless a reasonably good response rate for contemporary online surveys. Moreover, the responses within specific known categories of institutional character indicate that those non-member institutions that did respond are fairly representative of the larger group that received invitations.

Table 1 presents the rates of response for different categories of institution within the dimensions of institutional mission (i.e., Carnegie classification) and institutional control, and it also presents the average full-time equivalent undergraduate enrollments within each of these categories. Among the 186 institutions in the non-member segment of the census sample, 36.0 percent were at associate's colleges ( $n = 67$ ), 37.1 percent at baccalaureate colleges ( $n = 69$ ), 19.9 percent at master's colleges/universities ( $n = 37$ ), 5.4 percent at research/doctoral universities ( $n = 10$ ), and 1.6 percent at specialized institutions (e.g., schools of engineering). Among the 50 non-members that ultimately responded to the Census, 32.0 percent are associate's colleges (a difference of only -4 percentage points), 38.0 percent baccalaureate colleges (0.9 percentage points), 18.0 percent master's colleges/universities (-1.9 percentage points), 10.0 percent research/doctoral universities (4.6 percentage points), and 2.0 percent specialized institutions (0.4 percentage points). Responding institutions are also comparable in terms of institution size (measured as full-time equivalent undergraduate enrollment). The one exception to the general conclusion of representativeness is research/doctoral universities, which may be slightly overrepresented among responding non-member institutions, but the difference in the proportion of research/doctoral universities among responding compared to non-responding institutions is only marginally significant ( $p \leq .10$ ). Non-member respondents are

also representative when considering the dimension of institutional control: 56.5 percent of the 186 non-member sample are public institutions compared to the 50.0 percent of responding non-member institutions that are public.

Within the NCHC member institution segment of the 2016 Census, research/doctoral universities were also somewhat more likely to respond to the census survey. Table 2 presents a similar breakdown of the patterns of response for NCHC member institutions: Research/doctoral universities were 26 percent of responding member institutions whereas they are only 19.5% in the larger NCHC member group, and the difference in the proportion among those responding compared to those not responding is significant at the  $p \leq .01$  level. Otherwise, when we look at institutional control, size, and Carnegie classification, responding institutions appear to be a reasonably representative cross-section of the larger group of NCHC member institutions. However, of the overall sample, it appears that honors colleges ( $n = 105$  out of approximately 136 honors colleges that we believe are NCHC members; see Scott and Smith) were more likely to respond to the 2016 Census: the 105 NCHC member institutions that responded to the census represent approximately 75 percent of the known honors colleges among NCHC members, and the remaining 303 institutional members reporting for member honors programs represent approximately 43 percent of NCHC member honors programs. These varying response rates mean that any overall summary statistics calculated from 2016 Census data would be disproportionately affected by the responses from NCHC members and honors colleges. For these reasons, it is important to examine these segments of the data separately.

## RESULTS

Tables 3–8 present results for census items, first by membership status, then by broad Carnegie classification (distinguishing two-year from four-year degree institutions), and then, within the four-year group, by honors organizational structure as a college or program. Aggregate results (regardless of membership, Carnegie classification, or honors organization) are presented in the far-right column.

Table 3 describes institutional features. Honors education is most often delivered through a program with an honors student enrollment of more than 5% of the overall student body at a four-year public institution ( $[466.9 / 8,034.6] \times 100 = 5.8\%$ ). Comparing NCHC members to non-members reveals that the latter have smaller programs (in terms of student numbers), are located within smaller schools, and are more likely to be at private

**TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF RESPONDING AND NON-RESPONDING INSTITUTIONS IN THE NON-MEMBER SAMPLE**

Institutional Characteristic	All Non-Members in Sample			Responding Non-Members		
	n	Percent	Mean Enrollment	n	Percent	Mean Enrollment
<b>Carnegie Classification</b>						
<i>Associate's Colleges</i>	67	36.0	4,245.2	16	32.0	4,732.4
<i>Baccalaureate Colleges</i>	69	37.1	1,558.2	19	38.0	1,817.9
<i>Master's Colleges/Universities</i>	37	19.9	3,621.0	9	18.0	2,845.9
<i>Research/Doctoral Universities</i>	10	5.4	10,861.1	5	10.0	9,918.1
<i>Specialized Institutions</i>	3	1.6	2,881.7	1	2.0	—
<b>Institutional Control</b>						
<i>Public</i>	105	56.5	4,266.9	25	50.0	5,568.4
<i>Private</i>	81	43.5	2,409.2	25	50.0	1,949.7
<b>Total</b>	186	100.0	3,457.9	50	100.0	3,759.0



TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF RESPONDING AND NON-RESPONDING INSTITUTIONS IN THE MEMBER SAMPLE

Institutional Characteristic	All Members in Sample			Responding Members		
	n	Percent	Mean Enrollment	n	Percent	Mean Enrollment
<b>Carnegie Classification</b>						
<i>Associate's Colleges</i>	190	22.7	7,544.5	83	20.8	7,424.5
<i>Baccalaureate Colleges</i>	150	17.9	2,460.1	62	15.5	2,689.3
<i>Master's Colleges/Universities</i>	328	39.1	5,908.4	150	37.5	6,451.2
<i>Research/Doctoral Universities</i>	163	19.5	15,539.7	104	26.0	16,139.0
<i>Specialized Institutions</i>	7	0.8	4,834.2	1	0.3	—
<b>Institutional Control</b>						
<i>Public</i>	536	63.5	10,010.7	277	68.4	10,873.3
<i>Private</i>	308	36.5	3,158.0	128	31.6	3,583.6
<b>Total</b>	844	100.0	7,510.0	405	100.0	8,563.7

Note: Five member schools don't have IPEDS profiles to allow for standard classification, and another six with IPEDS profiles nonetheless did not have Carnegie classification listed with IPEDS. Thus, only 838 had Carnegie classification data, and 844 had data for classification as having either private or public control. Note, further, that four of those 844 were listed as private, for-profit institutions.

**TABLE 3: INSTITUTIONAL FEATURES BY NCHC MEMBERSHIP STATUS, CARNEGIE CATEGORY, AND HONORS STRUCTURE**

Item	NCHC Member Institutions				Non-Member Institutions			
	Four-Year Institutions				Four-Year Institutions			
	Two-Year Institutions	Honors Programs	Honors Colleges	ALLNCHC Institutions	Two-Year Institutions	Honors Programs	Honors Colleges <sup>a</sup>	All Non- Member Institutions
Total responding institutions	84	223	101	408	16	31	—	47
1. Size (mean FTE undergraduates)	7,424.5	6,663.0	13,781.0	8,563.7	4,732.4	2,789.9	—	3,451.2
2. Number honors students (mean)	210.4	385.0	1,023.4	504.2	134.5	134.3	—	134.3
3. Institutional control (% public)	100.0	46.6	89.1	68.1	100.0	22.6	—	48.9
4. Percent women in honors (mean)	59.6	64.7	61.3	63.0	58.8	64.6	—	62.8
5. Carnegie Classification								
<i>Research/Doctoral University (%)</i>	0.0	22.5	54.0	25.6	0.0	10.0	—	6.5
<i>Master's University (%)</i>	0.0	49.1	46.0	38.2	0.0	26.7	—	17.4
<i>Baccalaureate College (%)</i>	0.0	28.4	0.0	15.5	0.0	63.3	—	41.3
<i>Associate's College (%)</i>	100.0	0.0	0.0	20.7	100.0	0.0	—	34.8

Source: The NCHC 2016 Census of U.S. Honors Programs and Colleges and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS) 2014 institutional data files.

Note: Em dashes (—) indicate instances where too few respondents or too few data existed to reasonably calculate summary statistics.

a. Fifty non-member institutions responded to the Census, but only three of those reported that they were an honors college. Because three schools are too few to summarize statistically, those three non-member honors colleges have been excluded from analyses of non-member institutions, and we instead focus on only honors programs at four-year institutions.

institutions. NCHC members are more likely to be doctoral and masters' universities while non-members are more likely to be baccalaureate and associate's colleges. For NCHC members, total undergraduate enrollments from four-year institutions are twice that for schools with honors colleges compared to programs, and the number of honors students is nearly three times as large (1,023 to 385). In addition, many more honors colleges are at public institutions (89%) whereas a majority of four-year institutions with honors programs are private (53%). Two-year institutions have smaller honors enrollments among NCHC members, but honors enrollments for non-member two-year institutions are on a par with those for non-member four-year institutions. Not surprisingly, all the two-year schools with honors are at public institutions.

Table 4 shows characteristics of the honors chief academic officer. Typically, honors programs have directors and colleges have deans; however, a significant minority of two-year institutions instead have a coordinator or chair of honors regardless of NCHC member status. Honors college deans typically have twelve-month contracts, and nearly three-fourths have full-time assignments. Programs rarely have full-time directors, but just over half of these directors have twelve-month appointments. Time assigned to honors is less for heads of honors at two-year schools, and the honors heads at non-NCHC members are much more likely to have less than 50% of full-time equivalency devoted to administering honors. Half of those running honors have been on the job three years or less while over a third have 4–10 years of experience, and 15% have been in charge of honors for 11 or more years. These results do not vary much by institution type, honors organization, or NCHC membership status.

Honors heads at four-year institutions nearly all have doctoral degrees compared to just over half at two-year institutions. Almost half of all honors heads come from the humanities, followed by the social sciences (more than one fourth) and STEM (one sixth); little variation is evident in the fields of highest degree by type of honors program/college. While nearly half (48%) of honors heads are women, among NCHC member institutions women honors heads are more concentrated at two-year institutions (73%) and less at four-year institutions (42%). Nine in ten of those running honors academic units are white. Almost six in ten honors heads teach honors courses as part of the duties of their position, an assignment that occurs in fewer honors colleges (44%) than programs (70%) among NCHC members.

For honors heads in full-time positions in honors, the 2016 Census added to the 2013 survey a question about salary. Wording for this item as

well as analytic detail about transformation of the categorical 2016 Census response options can be found in the Appendix. In order to calculate averages for various groupings of honors heads, we used the midpoint of each \$5,000 income range as the single-point estimate of salary. Further estimation fitting the Pareto distribution (see Hout; Ligon) to the upper end of the census income distribution was required for 11 respondents who indicated a salary in the top category of \$200,000+ (all of these were at doctoral/research universities and were deans at honors colleges). It is possible that this estimation could result in over- or under-stating salaries by some unknown degree of error; however, the average of \$147,293 (not presented in tables) calculated from these data for doctoral/research universities is within 1% of the \$145,707 average salary reported in 2013–14 by the College and University Professional Association in Higher Education (CUPA) for honors deans at doctorate-granting institutions. Thus, it would seem that the census item and the resulting data estimates represent a reasonably good approximation of the salaries for the population of honors heads.

While we have previously had salary data for honors deans at doctorate-granting institutions that provide us a source of external validation for the census salary item, we have not had those same kinds of data more broadly for honors program directors at either four- or two-year institutions, and results in Table 4 allow us to discuss these for the first time. While too few respondents among the non-member segment of the census sample provided salary data to report on the right panel of the table, we do have sufficient salary data for the member segment to estimate average salaries. Consistent with the previous CUPA salary figures for honors deans at doctorate-granting institutions, 2016 Census data reveal that honors college heads earned an average of almost \$152,000 in 2016–17. Not surprisingly, honors heads at four-year institution programs earn considerably less, on average ( = \$106,607), and heads at two-year institution programs earn less than that ( = \$92,208).

Findings in Table 5 answer questions about honors staff and faculty. Presence of honors staff is common, but those institutions without honors staff are less likely to be members of NCHC. Staffing is ubiquitous at NCHC member honors colleges (96%) and prevalent at NCHC member programs at two- (59%) and four-year (75%) institutions. The most commonly found staff members are honors advisors (at nearly two in three institutions among both NCHC members and non-members) while the next most prevalent are advisors for national fellowships (about a fourth) and recruiting officers (about a fifth). Compared to honors programs, honors colleges have more full-time staff members, on average, and they are also more likely to have staff

TABLE 4: LEADERSHIP FEATURES BY NCHC MEMBERSHIP STATUS, CARNEGIE CATEGORY, AND HONORS STRUCTURE

Item	NCHC Member Institutions						Non-Member Institutions				
	Four-Year Institutions			All NCHC Institutions			Four-Year Institutions			All Non-Member Institutions	
	Two-Year Institutions	Honors Programs	Honors Colleges	Two-Year Institutions	Honors Colleges	All NCHC Institutions	Two-Year Institutions	Honors Programs	Honors Colleges	All Non-Member Institutions	All Member Institutions
Total responding institutions	84	223	101	408	16	31	—	—	—	47	458
1. Title for the head of honors											
Dean (%)	0.0	1.8	68.3	17.9	0.0	0.0	—	—	—	0.0	16.4
Director (%)	52.4	90.1	28.7	67.1	43.8	86.7	—	—	—	71.7	67.1
Chair or Coordinator (%)	44.0	2.3	0.0	10.3	43.8	10.0	—	—	—	21.7	11.4
Other (%)	3.6	5.9	3.0	4.7	12.5	3.3	—	—	—	6.5	5.0
2. Percentage FTE for honors head											
Full-time (%)	16.0	22.0	78.0	34.9	7.7	0.0	—	—	—	2.4	31.8
50–99% of FTE in honors (%)	28.4	43.5	19.0	34.2	0.0	31.0	—	—	—	21.4	33.0
< 50% of FTE in honors (%)	55.6	34.6	3.0	30.9	92.3	69.0	—	—	—	76.2	35.2
3. Head has 12-month appt. (% yes)	42.0	56.4	92.0	62.3	35.7	27.6	—	—	—	30.2	59.5
4. Salary (\$1,000s) for head (mean)	92.2	106.6	151.7	129.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	129.9
5. Highest degree (% w/ doctorate)	53.1	94.1	93.9	85.8	66.7	93.3	—	—	—	84.4	85.5
6. Field of degree for honors head											
Education (%)	11.0	4.6	5.9	6.2	13.3	3.4	—	—	—	6.8	6.3
Humanities (%)	51.2	48.2	41.6	47.1	46.7	44.8	—	—	—	45.5	47.1

STEM fields (%)	9.8	17.0	20.8	16.5	20.0	17.2	—	18.2	16.5
Social sciences (%)	26.8	28.9	30.7	28.9	20.0	34.5	—	29.5	29.0
Professional (%)	1.2	1.4	1.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	—	0.0	1.1
7. Gender of head (% women)	73.3	42.1	40.6	47.7	46.7	51.7	—	50.0	47.6
8. Honors head race-ethnicity									
White, non-Hispanic (%)	86.1	91.2	91.9	90.3	93.3	89.3	—	90.7	90.2
Black, non-Hispanic (%)	5.1	4.2	2.0	3.8	0.0	0.0	—	0.0	3.6
Hispanic (%)	3.8	2.8	1.0	2.5	0.0	3.6	—	2.3	2.5
Asian, non-Hispanic (%)	2.5	0.9	4.0	2.0	6.7	7.1	—	7.0	2.5
Two or more races (%)	2.5	0.9	1.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	—	0.0	1.1
9. Number of years in position									
11+ years (%)	12.3	16.0	14.9	15.0	6.7	13.8	—	11.4	15.0
4–10 years (%)	30.9	36.5	34.7	34.9	40.0	34.5	—	36.4	35.0
3 years or less (%)	56.8	47.5	50.5	50.1	53.3	51.7	—	52.3	50.0
10. Teaching is part of duties (% yes)	54.9	70.0	43.6	60.3	64.3	65.5	—	65.1	60.8

Source: The NCHC 2016 Census of U.S. Honors Programs and Colleges.

Note: Em dashes (—) indicate instances where too few respondents or too few data existed to reasonably calculate summary statistics.

a. Fifty non-member institutions responded to the Census, but only three of those reported that they were an honors college. Because three schools are too few to summarize statistically, those three non-member honors colleges have been excluded from analyses of non-member institutions, and we instead focus on only honors programs at four-year institutions.

members who have been hired to help with development/fundraising and information technology.

To supplement staff, student workers are widely tapped at institutions for clerical or other help (over two-thirds). Student workers are found at nearly all honors colleges (94%) and at over two-thirds of four-year programs among NCHC members. Almost four in ten NCHC members at two-year institutions also have student workers. However, the data suggest that fewer non-member than NCHC member institutions have the support of student workers: only one-fifth of non-members have student workers.

Unlike staff, faculty rarely report to the honors head (14%), but that occurrence is twice as likely among NCHC members as it is for non-members (a difference that is not statistically significant). Having direct-report faculty occurs most at honors colleges (two in five), where the average is about six full-time and four part-time faculty members. About one in twelve honors colleges have tenure for honors faculty.

It is far more common to have faculty members who are not on direct-report to the honors head but are assigned to teach honors courses (over two-thirds of institutions), and most of these are full-time instructors. This arrangement is most common at two-year institutions (four in five) and honors colleges at four-year institutions (nearly four in five) among NCHC members: overall, NCHC members are more likely to have borrowed faculty designated to teach honors courses (seven in ten) than are non-members (one in two). Honors colleges with these arrangements average 35 full-time and 7 part-time honors faculty members, about three times more than programs at two-year or four-year institutions among NCHC members. Non-NCHC members have far fewer honors instructional resources by any measure. Faculty advisory committees are quite prevalent (87%) and similarly distributed across honors types among NCHC members. They are less prevalent among non-NCHC members (63%), especially at two-year schools (50%).

Table 6 shows that scholarships for honors students used to cover tuition and fees are widely available (more than two in three institutions). They are more common among NCHC members than non-members (70% to 54%), and among members they are more common at colleges (86%) than programs at four-year institutions (60%). Scholarships to cover costs of honors housing, while not as widespread, are nonetheless offered by 44% of all institutions; among NCHC member institutions with honors-designated housing, nearly two-thirds of honors colleges award housing scholarships compared to less than a third of four-year programs. The same pattern of

differences for honors scholarships covering costs of honors housing holds for honors-specific scholarships that cover expenses for on-campus housing regardless of whether it is honors-designated housing, except that the proportion of schools offering the latter scholarships is smaller for each category.

A majority (56%) of institutions have honors housing although fewer non-NCHC members have it (16%) compared to members (60%). Among NCHC member institutions, colleges are more likely to have honors housing than four-year programs (88% to 67%), with honors housing being rare at two-year institutions (7%). Not surprisingly, availability of living/learning community (LLC) programming reflects the same distributional pattern: honors LLCs are available at nearly 40% of institutions but rarely (11%) at non-NCHC member institutions, and among members they are more often available at colleges (70%) than four-year programs (46%). They are virtually nonexistent at two-year institutions (1%).

Honors academic space exists at about seven in ten institutions, but academic space is less often present at non-member institutions (cf. 76% to 15%). Among NCHC members, academic space can be found at nearly all institutions with honors colleges (94%) and most with programs (70%). One in six NCHC member institutions has a free-standing honors building; among NCHC members honors buildings are more common for colleges (40%) than programs at four-year institutions (14%). There are virtually no two-year institutions with an honors-designated building.

Honors students' participation fees are not common overall (7%), but they are more often found at NCHC member colleges (17%) compared to programs (5%). Those with a participation fee assess an average of nearly \$375 a year. Colleges average \$550 a year, compared to \$75 per year for four-year institution honors programs.

Table 7 presents typical curricular practices in the honors community. Nearly all institutions with honors education have honors courses that carry general education credit (95%) and honors courses that are available for honors students only (91%). Strong tendencies are also evident for interdisciplinary and research-intensive courses (over 80% each), with the latter more pervasive in colleges (93%) compared to four-year programs (78%) or two-year programs (70%). While the distribution varies, it does not differ much, indicating that honors course delivery follows modes of learning featuring breadth and depth (see National Collegiate Honors Council, "Modes of Honors Learning"). Other typical honors curricular features (in over half of all institutions) are honors contracts (64%), departmental courses (55%),



TABLE 5: STAFFING FEATURES BY NCHC MEMBERSHIP STATUS, CARNEGIE CATEGORY, AND HONORS STRUCTURE

Item	NCHC Member Institutions						Non-Member Institutions				
	Two-Year Institutions			All NCHC Institutions			Four-Year Institutions			All Non-Member Institutions	
	Institutions	Honors Programs	Honors Colleges	Institutions	Honors Colleges	Institutions	Institutions	Honors Programs	Honors Colleges <sup>a</sup>	Member Institutions	All Institutions
Total responding institutions	84	223	101	408	16	31	—	48.3	—	47	458
1. Professional staff assigned to honors (% yes)	59.0	75.2	96.0	77.1	50.0	—	—	—	—	48.9	74.4
1a. Number of full-time staff (mean for those who said yes to 1)	0.9	1.8	7.0	3.2	—	0.4	—	—	—	0.7	3.1
2. Honors advisors (% yes)	68.7	53.4	84.0	64.1	68.8	70.0	—	—	—	69.6	64.9
3. Development officer (% yes)	0.0	3.2	44.6	12.9	0.0	6.7	—	—	—	4.3	12.0
4. IT officer (% yes)	2.4	2.7	23.2	7.7	0.0	3.4	—	—	—	2.2	7.1
5. Nat'l fellowships advisor (% yes)	1.2	22.3	53.5	25.8	0.0	24.1	—	—	—	15.6	24.8
6. Recruitment officer (% yes)	8.4	15.8	37.6	19.8	12.5	16.7	—	—	—	15.2	19.4
7. Faculty report to honors (% yes)	3.6	7.7	40.0	14.8	6.3	6.9	—	—	—	6.7	13.9
7a. Number of full-time faculty (mean for those who said yes to 7)	—	2.3	5.8	4.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	4.3
7b. Number of part-time faculty (mean for those who said yes to 7)	—	1.9	4.2	3.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	3.2
8. "Borrowed" faculty (% yes)	79.5	61.4	77.2	69.1	37.5	60.0	—	—	—	52.2	67.5

8a. Number of full-time faculty (mean for those who said yes to 8)	13.9	11.6	35.0	18.5	—	5.1	—	4.5	17.3
8b. Number of part-time faculty (mean for those who said yes to 8)	2.4	1.8	6.6	3.2	—	0.6	—	0.7	3.0
9. Faculty can receive tenure in honors (% yes)	0.0	0.9	7.9	2.5	0.0	0.0	—	0.0	2.2
10. Faculty advisory cmte. (% yes)	89.2	87.3	83.2	86.6	50.0	70.0	—	63.0	84.1
11. Paid student workers (% yes)	38.6	66.7	94.0	67.7	12.5	23.3	—	19.6	62.6
11a. Number of student workers (mean for those who said yes to 11)	2.2	3.5	6.7	4.4	—	—	—	—	4.3

Source: The NCHC 2016 Census of U.S. Honors Programs and Colleges.

Note: Em dashes (—) indicate instances where too few respondents or too few data existed to reasonably calculate summary statistics.

a. Fifty non-member institutions responded to the Census, but only three of those reported that they were an honors college. Because three schools are too few to summarize statistically, those three non-member honors colleges have been excluded from analyses of non-member institutions, and we instead focus on only honors programs at four-year institutions.

TABLE 6: STUDENT COSTS AND BENEFITS BY NCHC MEMBERSHIP STATUS, CARNEGIE CATEGORY, AND HONORS STRUCTURE

Item	NCHC Member Institutions						Non-Member Institutions				
	Two-Year Institutions			Four-Year Institutions			All NCHC Institutions			Four-Year Institutions	
		Honors Programs	Honors Colleges		Honors Programs	Honors Colleges		Honors Colleges		Honors Programs	All Non-Member Institutions
Total responding institutions	84	223	101	408	16	31	—	—	—	47	458
1. Honors housing (% yes)	7.1	67.4	88.0	60.0	6.3	20.7	—	—	—	15.6	55.8
2. Living/learning program (% yes)	1.2	45.5	70.3	42.6	0.0	16.7	—	—	—	10.9	39.3
3. Scholarships for honors housing (% yes for those who said yes to 1)	—	32.7	65.5	44.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	44.0
4. Scholarships for on-campus housing (% yes)	8.4	23.5	51.5	27.4	6.3	16.7	—	—	—	13.0	26.0
5. Scholarships for tuition/fees (% yes)	77.4	59.5	85.9	69.7	62.5	50.0	—	—	—	54.3	68.1
6. On-campus academic space											
None (%)	28.9	30.5	6.1	24.1	87.5	83.3	—	—	—	84.8	30.2
Free-standing honors building (%)	2.4	14.1	39.4	17.9	0.0	0.0	—	—	—	0.0	16.0
Other space (%)	68.7	55.5	54.5	57.9	12.5	16.7	—	—	—	15.2	53.9
7. Separate fee for honors (% yes)	4.8	4.6	17.0	7.8	0.0	6.7	—	—	—	4.3	7.3
7a. Fee, in dollars per year (mean for those who said yes to 7)	—	74.3	552.1	373.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	368.3

Source: The NCHC 2016 Census of U.S. Honors Programs and Colleges.

Note: Em dashes (—) indicate instances where too few respondents or too few data existed to reasonably calculate summary statistics.

a. Fifty non-member institutions responded to the Census, but only three of those reported that they were an honors college. Because three schools are too few to summarize statistically, those three non-member honors colleges have been excluded from analyses of non-member institutions, and we instead focus on only honors programs at four-year institutions.

and study abroad courses (55%). Practices that are quite common (40–49%) include thesis requirements, capstone courses, service learning, experiential education, and courses that combine class meetings with an online or courseware component. Internships expressly for honors students are less frequently available (20%) as are honors distance education courses (13%). Overall, honors courses average about 20% of the degree credits students need for graduation, and this percentage varies little among NCHC member institutions regardless of institutional mission or honors organizational structure.

In a comparison of NCHC members to non-members in their distribution of curricular honors practices, the former are more likely to have the full range of practices except for service learning (both are 49%) and research-intensive courses (80% to 85%), for which the small differences are too small to distinguish statistically. Among four-year member institutions, programs and colleges have similar curricular practices for honors contracts, separate honors courses, interdisciplinary courses, general education courses, and thesis requirements, but honors colleges are more likely to have courses in departments (73% to 54%), service learning (61% to 41%), study abroad (80% to 56%) and experiential education (62% to 50%: a difference only significant at the .10 level); research-intensive courses (93% to 78%); internships for honors students (44% to 15%); and courses with an online component or courseware (51% to 32%) or held completely online (18% to 7%). Honors colleges also have a higher average proportion of undergraduate credit hours earned through honors, but the difference is not significant. Slightly fewer honors colleges compared to four-year honors programs have a capstone course (45% to 51%) or a service requirement (32% to 39%), but these differences are fairly small and not statistically significant. For the most part, fewer two-year institutions feature all of these curricular offerings with the exception of service learning courses (54%), a service requirement (42%), and the infusion of educational technology (hybrid courses, 60%; distance education courses, 26%). These differences are not very significant and line up with prior research (Cognard-Black and Savage).

Table 8 presents findings about administrative expectations for honors academic units and the degree to which they participate in advancement efforts. Assessment, annual reports, strategic plans, and financial audits are found at more than half of all institutions, and more than a third of institutions invite external site visitors for a periodic review of honors. All such practices appear far less often at non-member institutions. Among member institutions, these administrative expectations generally are more prevalent

TABLE 7: CURRICULAR FEATURES BY NCHC MEMBERSHIP STATUS, CARNEGIE CATEGORY, AND HONORS STRUCTURE

Item	NCHC Member Institutions						Non-Member Institutions				
	Two-Year			Four-Year Institutions			Four-Year Institutions			All Non-Member	
	Institutions	Programs	Honors Colleges	Institutions	Honors Colleges	All NCHC Institutions	Institutions	Programs	Honors Colleges <sup>a</sup>	Member Institutions	All Institutions
Total responding institutions	84	223	101	408	16	31	—	—	—	47	458
1. Contract courses (% yes)	60.7	65.5	64.0	64.1	81.3	46.7	—	—	—	58.7	63.6
2. Departmental honors (% yes)	46.4	54.2	73.0	57.3	31.3	33.3	—	—	—	32.6	54.6
3. Separate courses in honors (% yes)	76.2	96.8	97.0	92.6	50.0	86.7	—	—	—	73.9	90.8
4. Interdisc. curriculum (% yes)	67.5	86.4	84.0	81.9	62.5	83.3	—	—	—	76.1	81.0
5. Have courses that fulfill general education requirements (% yes)	96.4	96.3	97.0	96.5	81.3	83.3	—	—	—	82.6	95.1
6. Percentage credits in honors (mean)	23.8	18.8	24.3	21.1	16.8	12.1	—	—	—	13.5	20.4
7. Hon. thesis requirement(% yes)	7.4	57.4	58.0	47.4	12.5	46.7	—	—	—	34.8	46.4
8. Hon. capstone course (% yes)	37.3	51.1	45.0	46.8	12.5	36.7	—	—	—	28.3	44.8
9. Hon. svc. requirement (% yes)	41.5	38.6	32.3	37.6	25.0	37.9	—	—	—	33.3	37.4
10. Hon. svc. learning courses (% yes)	53.7	41.0	61.0	48.6	56.3	43.3	—	—	—	47.8	48.7
11. Hon. study abroad courses (% yes)	28.9	57.5	79.8	57.1	25.0	40.0	—	—	—	34.8	54.7
12. Hon. exper. educ. courses (% yes)	34.1	50.0	61.6	49.6	31.3	46.7	—	—	—	41.3	48.9
13. Hon. research-intensive courses (% yes)	69.5	77.8	93.1	79.9	75.0	90.0	—	—	—	84.8	80.4

14. Hon. internships (% yes)	12.0	15.3	43.6	21.8	6.3	6.7	—	6.5	20.3
15. Have hon. courses with online/ courseware component (% yes)	60.2	32.4	50.5	42.6	40.0	17.2	—	25.0	40.6
16. Have hon. courses entirely online (% yes)	25.6	7.3	17.8	13.6	18.8	3.3	—	8.7	13.1

Source: The NCHC 2016 Census of U.S. Honors Programs and Colleges.

Note: Em dashes (—) indicate instances where too few respondents or too few data existed to reasonably calculate summary statistics.

a. Fifty non-member institutions responded to the Census, but only three of those reported that they were an honors college. Because three schools are too few to summarize statistically, those three non-member honors colleges have been excluded from analyses of non-member institutions, and we instead focus on only honors programs at four-year institutions.

TABLE 8: ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROGRAM ADVANCEMENT FEATURES BY NCHC MEMBERSHIP STATUS, CARNEGIE CATEGORY, AND HONORS STRUCTURE

Item	NCHC Member Institutions				Non-Member Institutions			
	Four-Year Institutions			All NCHC Institutions	Four-Year Institutions			All Non-Member Institutions
	Two-Year Institutions	Honors Programs	Honors Colleges		Two-Year Institutions	Honors Programs	Honors Colleges <sup>a</sup>	
Total responding institutions	84	223	101	408	16	31	—	47
Administrative Characteristics								
1. Has a strategic plan (% yes)	44.4	50.2	82.2	57.1	25.0	26.7	—	26.1
2. Produces an annual report (% yes)	56.6	67.3	72.3	66.3	43.8	53.3	—	50.0
3. Implements assessment plan (% yes)	64.2	66.7	83.0	70.3	31.3	51.7	—	44.4
4. Has periodic external review (% yes)	32.9	40.3	44.6	39.8	18.8	6.7	—	10.9
5. Has periodic audits (% yes)	51.2	53.6	76.2	58.9	25.0	32.1	—	29.5
Advancement Characteristics								
6. Has an alumni association (% yes)	13.3	15.1	42.6	21.6	6.3	13.3	—	10.9
7. Has alumni programming (% yes)	12.0	28.6	63.0	33.7	6.3	16.7	—	13.0
8. Is expected to raise \$ (% yes)	22.9	25.5	74.7	37.2	18.8	20.7	—	20.0
9. Has advisory council for fund-raising and advancement (% yes)	10.8	11.0	46.5	19.9	12.5	0.0	—	4.3
								18.1

Source: The NCHC 2016 Census of U.S. Honors Programs and Colleges.

Note: Em dashes (—) indicate instances where too few respondents or too few data existed to reasonably calculate summary statistics.

a. Fifty non-member institutions responded to the Census, but only three of those reported that they were an honors college. Because three schools are too few to summarize statistically, those three non-member honors colleges have been excluded from analyses of non-member institutions, and we instead focus on only honors programs at four-year institutions.

for colleges than four-year programs and are more common for four-year than two-year programs. Approximately three-fourths of colleges have a strategic plan, produce an annual report, implement assessment, and undergo financial audit; nearly 45% have periodic reviews by external site visitors.

Advancement activities are less common: over one-third of all institutions are expected to raise funds; under one-fifth have an advancement advisory council; one-fifth have an honors alumni organization; and nearly one-third hold periodic honors alumni programming. NCHC members are far more likely than non-members to do or have all of these. Among members, the comparative percentages for colleges, four-year programs, and two-year programs are as follows: alumni organization (43% to 15% to 13%), alumni programming (63% to 29% to 12%), advisory council for fundraising and development (47% to 11% to 11%), and expectations to raise funds from external sources (75% to 26% to 23%).

## DISCUSSION

From the first-ever census of institutions with honors education in the United States, findings bring into sharp relief a clear pattern, one that depicts an honors landscape similar to that found in our previous research on demography of honors but with a wider frame that includes curricular practices and more characteristics of honors heads. We begin with those institutions having no access to NCHC's advocacy for honors education, professional development, and research findings to better situate honors practices. The data make plain that in general these programs are struggling. We found previously that throughout all facets of the delivery of honors education, institutions not aligned with NCHC on average have fewer resources and are more isolated from the honors community (Smith and Scott, "Demography"). The 2016 Census extends our knowledge, showing that in a comparison of non-NCHC members to members, the former offer their students fewer benefits in both curricular and co-curricular portions of the program. Curricular variety in honors modes of learning is far more constricted at non-member institutions, and students have few opportunities to engage in LLC programming. Coordinators have less time to run these programs given their other non-honors duties. An argument could be made that non-member institutions experiencing these conditions could benefit from NCHC's information and best practices—e.g., Definition of Honors Education, including Basic Characteristics documents; Modes of Learning documents; and publications—as well as the professional community that NCHC provides to its member



institutions. Most likely, however, the vast majority of non-members do not have the wherewithal to sustain a membership (Scott and Smith); 30% of non-member institutions cited cost as the primary reason for not having an institutional membership (not presented in tables). Further research by the NCHC is warranted to discover how best to advocate for non-member programs and train their faculty and administrators.

A few non-member institutions are doctoral universities with large honors programs, a profile different from typical non-members. A new association, Honors Education at Research Universities (HERU), has been formed to address features of honors education unique to these institutions. The extent to which doctoral universities have unique features in their approach to honors education is an empirical question that remains to be answered and that the analysis in the present paper is not designed to address. Data from the NCHC 2016 Census of U.S. Honors Programs and Colleges could, however, be used in a future study to examine differences among doctoral, master's, baccalaureate, and associate's institutions. Findings would presumably help HERU and NCHC understand whether differences exist and how to target advocacy and professional development for honors education across these institutional types.

While the present study shows that NCHC members in general have more human, infrastructural, and financial resources and offer a wider range of courses, co-curricular programming, honors LLCs, and honors scholarships, the pattern of tendencies and variation that has been reported in previous demographic studies of honors holds in these census results as well (Scott; Smith and Scott, "Growth"; Scott and Smith; Smith and Scott, "Demography"). Consider the central tendencies. Honors courses are frequently offered for general education credit as a component of a stand-alone (non-departmental) program, where the courses tend to be interdisciplinary and research-intensive, with borrowed faculty and an advisory council that work with an honors head who has been on the job three years or less. Additionally, the honors head and staff are located in an honors center, advise honors students, and carry out other administrative duties for the institution. These features are most commonly found in honors education regardless of the type of program or college or institution in which it is housed. The fact that these findings appear once again in this study suggests that the basic features of honors education are stable rather than an artifact of sampling bias and that many of NCHC's Basic Characteristics are rooted in empirical realities.

Differences are also important, however. As we have seen before, characteristics and practices differ between honors colleges and programs and,

among programs, between four- and two-year institutions. Honors colleges are larger, located at bigger institutions, especially at doctorate-granting universities, and they are more highly staffed by instructors and support personnel; are more likely to offer courses with high-impact pedagogies such as research and experiential learning; have a larger footprint on campus with academic and residential spaces; and function more like other academic units with a full range of administrative and advancement expectations. Institutions that consider joining the recent trend of transitioning from a program to a college (Cognard-Black) should understand the infusion of resources necessary to carry out the change (Smith and Scott, “Demography”).

As with central tendencies, systemic variation in honors education by type of honors delivery (colleges, four-year programs, and two-year programs) can now be considered a stable finding and not likely an artifact of sampling bias. While a more thorough study is still to be done that compares changes over time from the 2012–13 survey to the 2016 census, the basic cross-sectional description of the landscape of honors education emerging from each appears to be largely the same.

## CONCLUSION

The demography of honors has introduced an analysis protocol affording a macrosocial perspective on how honors education functions at the inter-organizational level. Akin to a helicopter shot in filmmaking, this perspective flies away from the limited vantage of close-ups on students or faculty or courses or administrative practices and instead depicts the scene as a whole. Important features emerge in such a depiction, namely the institutional tendencies and variation across the landscape of honors education.

The prior demography of honors studies (Scott; Smith and Scott, “Growth”; Scott and Smith, 2016; Smith and Scott, “Demography”) helped lead to the census conducted for this article, and the dataset assembled through the census is arguably as important as the findings thus far published. We know the size of the honors community and its presence in undergraduate higher education in the United States, and we know how its delivery varies across institutional control and Carnegie classification, honors type, and NCHC member status, but there is much more to learn from these data.

The Appendix lists information fields available in NCHC files, and unit-level data are now available for scholars to access via the NCHC Data Use Policy, which can be found on the NCHC Surveys and Summary Tables page of the National Collegiate Honors Council’s Research website. The following

is a brief and certainly not comprehensive list of research questions that these data can answer: (1) What significant changes have occurred in the delivery of honors education and in the institutional features of those offering it during the past half-decade among NCHC member institutions (comparing any set of information fields from the 2012–13 survey with the 2016 Census)? (2) How do institutions vary by Carnegie classification in the delivery of honors education and the institutional features of those offering it (comparing doctoral universities to master’s universities to baccalaureate colleges to associate’s colleges)? (3) What critical differences distinguish university-wide honors from departmental honors? (4) How do operations and resources vary by length of service of the head honors administrator? (5) What structural and operational variables correlate with persistence and graduation rates (tapping data from the Admissions, Retention and Completion Survey Summary Table on the National Collegiate Honors Council’s website)?

Using the IPEDS “Use the Data” page available online at the National Center for Education Statistics, every institutional member of NCHC should also be able to access its own profile and compare its features, e.g., Carnegie classification and institutional control, to the larger honors community or a sub-category of which it is a part in order to better understand and gauge location in the institutional landscape. We hope that such knowledge can aid honors administrators in their requests for sufficient support from their institutions.

As NCHC intensifies its mission-centric goals of advocacy and professional development, it will need a solid base of empirical knowledge. Honors scholarship on the practice of teaching and learning at the course level and student learning outcomes at the program level are critical to advance honors education and frame it more fully as what could arguably be called a profession of higher education in its own right. That scholarship, in turn, can and should be contextualized by studies of the field’s breadth across place and its evolution over time. We hope that data such as ours will help meet precisely this need.

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# APPENDIX Description of Study Variables

Item/Question	Level of Measurement	Description/Response Options
<b>Institutional Features</b>		
Size of institution (from fall 2014 IPEDS data)	Ratio	Number of undergraduate full-time equivalent students
How many students were in your honors program/college in fall 2015?	Ratio	Number of students
Institutional control (from fall 2014 IPEDS data)	Nominal	(1) Public; (2) Private, non-profit; (3) Private, for-profit
Percentage of women among honors students	Ratio	Calculated from the number of men and women students reported in honors
Carnegie classification (from fall 2014 IPEDS data)	Nominal	(1) Research/Doctoral University; (2) Master's University; (3) Baccalaureate College; (4) Associate's College
<b>Leadership Features</b>		
What is the title of the person who heads your honors program/college?	Nominal	(1) Coordinator; (2) Director; (3) Dean; (4) Other
Percentage of full-time equivalency (FTE) for honors head	Ordinal	Calculated from two Census items asking whether the honors head was in a full-time dedicated position in honors or less than full-time, and, among those less than full-time, what the percent of full-time equivalency for the position was. Respondents were then grouped into those who were (1) full-time dedicated honors administrators; (2) 50–99% of full-time equivalency; or (3) less than 50% of full-time equivalency.

Item/Question	Level of Measurement		Description/Response Options
	Measurement		
Is the appointment of this position on a twelve-month contract or something less than twelve months?	Nominal		(1) 12 month contract; (2) Contract for fewer than 12 months each year
What is the current base annual salary (gross salary, before taxes) of the person who heads honors?	Ratio		Asked only of those who indicated that they were full-time dedicated honors administrators, the response options for the original Census question were in \$5,000 increments starting with "Less than \$30,000" and topping out at "\$200,000 or greater." Single point estimates of individual salaries were then derived from categorical response options by taking the midpoint of each range as the salary. Of the 121 who responded to the question, zero indicated a salary less than \$30,000, and 11 indicated a salary in the top category of \$200,000 or greater. For those in the upper category of 200K+, estimates were derived using a formula based on fitting the Pareto curve to the upper end of the income distribution (see Hout 2004; Lignon 1994). Individual salaries were then adjusted for those reporting work on a contract shorter than 12 months per year. Those reporting work on contracts shorter than 12 months per year were assumed to have 10-month contracts and salaries were adjusted upward accordingly by multiplying by a factor of 1.2.
What is the highest degree earned of the current head of honors?	Ordinal		(1) Associate's degree; (2) Bachelor's degree; (3) Master's degree; (4) Doctoral degree--professional practice; (5) Doctoral degree--research/scholarship; (6) Other
What is the disciplinary area of the highest degree earned by the current head of honors?	Nominal		28 separate disciplinary response options were presented under broad division headings including "Education," "Fine Arts or Humanities," "Mathematics, Engineering, or Natural/Physical Sciences," "Social or Behavioral Sciences," and "Other Field," including a write-in option for a specific "Other Field." For the purposes of this analysis, specific discipline responses were grouped into the larger divisions for simplicity.

What is the gender of the current head of honors?	Nominal	Respondents were asked to select from among (1) Man; (2) Woman; (3) Transgender (note: only one respondent indicated transgender).
What is the race-ethnicity of the current head of honors?	Nominal	Respondents were given the option to select all that applied from among (1) African American or Black; (2) American Indian or Alaskan Native; (3) Asian; (4) Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin; (5) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; (6) White; and (7) "Some other race-ethnicity." Responses were examined for common groupings, and then coded to group into the following mutually exclusive categories: (1) White non-Hispanic; (2) African American, non-Hispanic; (3) Hispanic; (4) Asian, non-Hispanic; (5) Two or more races or ethnicities reported.
How many years has the current head of honors served in that position?	Ordinal	The original Census item was coded as a ratio measure of the number of whole years serving in the position. If less than one year, respondents were instructed to report zero. For this analysis, respondents were then grouped into categories based on the following ranges: (1) 3 years or less; (2) 4–10 years; and (3) 11 years or more.
Is teaching credit-bearing courses part of the duties included in the job description for the position described above [honors head]?	Nominal	Yes/No
<b>Staffing Features</b>		
Do you have professional (i.e., non-student) staff assigned to honors?	Nominal	Yes/No
Not including the honors head, how many full-time staff positions do you have in honors right now? [asked of those who said yes to previous]	Ratio	Number of full-time staff positions other than honors head
Do you have one or more honors advisors?	Nominal	Yes/No



Item/Question	Level of Measurement	Description/Response Options
Do you have a development officer in honors?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have an information technology (IT) officer in honors?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have a national fellowships/scholarships advisor in honors?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have a recruitment officer in honors?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have faculty members who report to honors rather than some other home (i.e., disciplinary department)?	Nominal	Yes/No
How many full-time faculty do you have who report to honors? [asked of those who said yes to previous]	Ratio	Number of full-time faculty who report to honors
How many part-time faculty do you have who report to honors? [asked of those who said yes to having faculty reporting to honors]	Ratio	Number of part-time faculty who report to honors
Do you have faculty who do not report to honors but are assigned to teach in honors on a regular, recurring basis?	Nominal	Yes/No
How many full-time faculty do you have who do not report to honors but are assigned to teach in honors on a regular, recurring basis? [asked of those who said yes to previous]	Ratio	Number of full-time "borrowed" faculty

How many part-time faculty do you have who do not report to honors but are assigned to teach in honors on a regular, recurring basis? [asked of those who said yes to previous]	Ratio	Number of part-time "borrowed" faculty
Can honors faculty receive tenure in honors?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have an honors faculty advisory committee?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have paid student workers who provide clerical or other support in honors?	Nominal	Yes/No
How many paid student workers do you typically have at any one time whom you can schedule for work in honors? [asked of those who said yes to previous]	Ratio	Number of paid student workers
<b>Student Costs and Benefits of Honors</b>		
Do you have designated honors housing available?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have honors living/learning programming?	Nominal	Yes/No
Are there honors-specific scholarships available at your school that can be used to cover expenses for honors housing? [asked of those who said yes to having honors housing]	Nominal	Yes/No
Are there honors-specific scholarships available at your school that can be used to cover expenses for on-campus housing regardless of whether it is honors-designated housing?	Nominal	Yes/No

Item/Question	Level of Measurement	Description/Response Options
Are there honors-specific scholarships available at your school that can be used to cover tuition and/or fees?	Nominal	Yes/No
Which of the following best describes the honors academic space on campus?	Ordinal	Calculated from two Census items asking whether honors has academic space on campus, and, among those who said yes, which of the following best describes the honors academic space on campus. Response options in the Census were (1) "We have a free-standing honors building"; (2) "We have an honors center but not our own building"; (3) "We have one or more honors offices but not our own center"; and (4) "Other," followed by a write-in option. Common examples of other write-in options were lounges, library spaces, honors classrooms, and one respondent indicated an entire honors campus. Responses were examined for common groupings, and for this analysis responses were then coded to group into the following categories: (1) None; (2) Free-standing honors building; and (3) Other space.
Is there a separate fee that honors students pay to participate in honors in addition to the regular tuition and fees charged to enroll at your institution?	Nominal	Yes/No
How much is that fee for the year? [asked of those who said yes to the previous]	Ratio	Fee, in dollars
<b>Curricular Features</b>		
Do you have honors contract courses?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have departmental honors?	Nominal	Yes/No

Do you have separate honors courses that are available only to students in your honors program/college?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have an interdisciplinary honors curriculum?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have honors courses that fulfill general education requirements?	Nominal	Yes/No
What is the percentage of undergraduate credits that are earned in honors courses or other credit-bearing honors requirements?	Ratio	Percentage of credits
Do you have a thesis requirement in honors?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have a capstone course in honors?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have a service requirement in honors?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have service learning courses in honors?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have study abroad courses in honors?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have experiential education courses in honors?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have honors courses that are research-intensive?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have internships specifically for honors students?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have honors courses with an online/courseware component?	Nominal	Yes/No
Do you have honors distance education courses that are entirely online?	Nominal	Yes/No

Item/Question	Level of Measurement	Description/Response Options
<b>Administrative and Program Advancement Features</b>		
Does honors have a strategic plan?	Nominal	Yes/No
Does honors produce an annual report?	Nominal	Yes/No
Does honors implement an assessment plan?	Nominal	Yes/No
Does honors undergo periodic program review by external visitors?	Nominal	Yes/No
Does honors undergo periodic financial audit by the university?	Nominal	Yes/No
Does honors have an alumni association or chapter?	Nominal	Yes/No
Does honors hold periodic alumni programming?	Nominal	Yes/No
Does your institution expect honors to raise funds from external sources?	Nominal	Yes/No
Does honors have an advisory council for fundraising/development/advancement?	Nominal	Yes/No

Note: Items come from the NCHC 2016 Census of U.S. Honors Programs and Colleges unless otherwise indicated. Data for institutional size, control, and Carnegie classification come from the U.S. Department of Education Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) 2014 data files available online at [nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/DataFiles.aspx](https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/DataFiles.aspx).